

COASTAL EMPIRE WELCOME HOME CELEBRATION





Photos by Sgt. Jacob A. McDonald

The Ring of Fire ride dominated one end of Walker Field at the midway Saturday. The carnival was in town March 22-26.

Soldiers play at homecoming

Frontline Staff

Fort Stewart and the Coastal Empire officially welcomed home 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers at a celebration Saturday at Walker and Donovan fields.

Gov. Sonny Perdue and leaders from the communities around Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield joined Maj. Gen. William Webster and 3rd Inf. Div. Soldiers in kicking-off the Coastal Empire's Welcome Home Celebration with a ceremony at Fort Stewart's Marne Garden Saturday.

Webster thanked the local communities for their support during the division's year-long deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III in 2005.

"You were always with us in spirit and prayer and we appreciate you coming together today for the official Welcome Home Ceremony for the 3rd Infantry Division," he said. "My special thanks to the awesome families of the 3rd Infantry Division and the retirees and civilians who work on post and those who support us downtown for being here today and their continued support to allow us to honor these Soldiers on the field and the rest of the Soldiers who could not be here today."

Webster briefly outlined the successes that his division, as part of Task Force Baghdad, accomplished in Iraq.

"We left Iraq in better condition than it was when we arrived," he said. "When we arrived, there was one Iraqi

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James McDonald, 3, dives across the bounce house at the carnival Saturday.



Kenny Adkins loads a crossbow at a carnival game for Gabriel Cruz, 9, Friday.

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Army battalion, now there are over 22 battalions.” Following the ceremony, the celebration began. It featured free carnival rides and games, the Dale Earnhardt Jr. NASCAR Experience, the Budweiser Clydesdales, a petting zoo and free food for Soldiers and their families.

Families played throughout the day at the different venues. Rides for adults and children at the carnival on Walker Field included rollercoasters, a Gravitron, bumper cars, a ferris wheel and a fun house, among others.

The free food was provided by local restaurants who set up tents on one end of Donovan Field.

Comedian Jeff Foxworthy and country-western singer Chely Wright entertained thousands of Soldiers and families on Donovan Field, capping the day-long Welcome Home Celebration sponsored by local businesses and organizations.

Foxworthy and Wright each performed for an hour, then took time to greet 3rd Inf. Div. Soldiers and sign autographs for the warriors who recently returned from their year-long deployment.



Photos by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Above: Lucilla Herrera and her daughter, Kairi, feed a llama at a petting zoo that was part of Saturday's Welcome Home Celebration activities.

Right: Comedian Jeff Foxworthy entertains a crowd of 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers and their families during a USO show at Fort Stewart Saturday.



Country singer Chely Wright performs for Soldiers and their families during the 3rd Infantry Division's Welcome Home Celebration at Donovan Field Saturday.



Photos by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Members of the 3rd Infantry Division Color Guard present the colors during the opening ceremony of the Coastal Empire's Welcome Home Celebration at Marne Garden Saturday.



Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., commanding general, 3rd Infantry Division, addresses a gathering of community leaders, Soldiers and family members during an opening ceremony Saturday.

Division, friends honor OIF warriors

3rd Infantry Division Public Affairs

Gov. Sonny Perdue and leaders from the communities around Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield joined Maj. Gen. William Webster and Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division in kicking off the Coastal Empire's Welcome Home Celebration with a ceremony at Marne Garden Saturday.

Standing in formation at the ceremony were Soldiers who were awarded valor medals for their duty in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III in 2005.

Hinesville Mayor Thomas Ratcliffe also thanked the Soldiers.

"You do it as a free choice to place yourselves in harm's way for the benefit of others," he said. "We want you to know that we're grateful for that sacrifice. You oppose the enemies of all men, tyranny, terrorism, poverty and disease; this is but a token of our appreciation. It is a celebration; we want you to have a good time. On behalf of coastal Georgia, I want to say thank you."

Sonny Purdue, Georgia governor, reiterated how thankful he and the people of Georgia were to the 3rd Inf. Div.

"We're proud of our Soldiers and proud to claim the 3rd Infantry Division as Georgia's own," Purdue said. "By your actions, you have made our country and our families safer. You have helped remove a dictator, liberate a nation, and give the Iraqi a people a chance to enjoy freedom."



The U. S. flag arrives at the opening ceremony.

110th Qm. Co. says goodbye to loved ones

Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft
Staff Writer

"In the words of a famous singer, we'll have a blue, blue Christmas," said Col. Brian R. Layer, Division Support Brigade commander, during a farewell ceremony as his 110th Quartermaster Company prepared to deploy to Iraq from its home at Hunter Army Airfield Dec. 2, 2004.

Although several 110th Soldiers echoed Layer's sentiments, most also said that they felt the unit was well prepared to go back.

"This is my third time (deploying to Iraq)," said Sgt. Donald Rolston, supply section sergeant. "It's getting kind of monotonous, but it's part of the job, you know, comes with the territory."

1st Lt. Rocky Torres, company executive officer, said although there are quite a few Soldiers in the unit who have never deployed, the training the company has received will be more than adequate to keep it going strong.

"The Soldiers are well-prepped, they know what they have to do and they feel confident in their (NCOs)," he said. "I think the key is training, and these Soldiers are well-trained for this operation."

One of the Soldiers Torres was referring to was Pfc. Anna Preciado, a supply specialist.

Even though Preciado has only been with 110th for four months, she said the deployment and being gone for the holidays was not an issue for her.

"I'm not too worried," she said. "I feel safe, and I know my higher-ups will take care of us."

As far as missing Christmas with her family, Preciado said she'd put it behind her.

"I called my family and said goodbye, but the

people I deploy with are both my family and my friends," she said. "I know I'll be all right."

When the 110th arrives in Iraq, its primary mission in Operation Iraqi Freedom will be to keep the units it supports supplied with all the fuel they need, as well to receive, transport, issue and store that fuel — thus, its nickname, "Fuel Warriors."

On the Fuel Warriors' first OIF deployment in January 2003, the unit handled more than 200 million gallons of JP-8 fuel and established several bulk fuel site in theater in a seven-month period.

"Deployment is not a new thing for the 110th," said Lt. Col. John H. Sutton, 260th Quartermaster Battalion commander. "They have been the Army's go-to petroleum company, and they have continued to be always ready ... they are a team, they are professional and they are ready."

"As I look at this formation, I see warriors," Hutton continued. "110th Soldiers, you are in our thoughts and prayers you will make your nation proud."

During this holiday season, the Fuel Warriors are serving as an example of the Army's duty to complete its missions, no matter when or where.

"You'll do it the way Soldiers always have — by taking care of each other," Layer said to his troops before they boarded the plane that would take them back to the Middle East. "It's faith that will get us through this."

Although Layer's words were received with nods from the assembled crowd, Rolston also spoke for many of his colleagues.

"It's hot and it's hard, but someone's got to do it," he said as he joined his company's formation and prepared to accomplish his mission once more.



Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Sgt. Charles Duke III, 110th Qm. Co., DSB, hugs his wife, Denise, and son, Charles IV, goodbye after his unit's farewell ceremony at Hunter Dec. 2, 2004.

a look back



1st BCT 'Raiders' ship equipment off to Iraq for OIF III deployment

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane, Jr.
1st BCT PAO

As part of the upcoming deployment to Iraq, elements of the 1st Brigade Combat Team "Raiders" took vehicles and equipment to the port in Savannah to be loaded onto a ship during the last two weeks of November 2004.

Two of the Navy's largest ships, the USNS Sisler and the USNS Seay, will load more than 514,000 square feet of military cargo to be shipped to the Middle East for Operation Iraqi Freedom III, said Trish Larson, a Military Sealift Command representative.

"The ships are 950 feet long, each with seven individual decks for storage," Larson said. "The stern ramps are made to swing to either the port or starboard side of the ship for maximum loading advantage."

"There are also cranes on the front of the ship to load cargo containers. The only ship the Navy has that is larger

than this one is an aircraft carrier, which is about 100 feet longer than these cargo ships," she added.

The two ships were also used during OIF I. The ships are noncombatant, and together have been used to move more than 2,139,000 square feet of military cargo in support of the Global War on Terrorism, Larson said.

A crew of civilian contractors, or Merchant Marines, runs the ships.

Some of the crew will be armed.

Along with the civilian crew, a small group of Soldiers will also ride along to contribute to security.

"These guys are giving up time with their families over the holidays to be a part of this crew, so they are sacrificing a lot," said Maj. Eric Shaw, brigade logistics officer.

Soldiers from 1st BCT took their wheeled vehicles to the port in a convoy, while the track vehicles were transported by train

"The overall loading will take about four-and-a-half days,"

Shaw said. "That will be to load each ship. It will take two ships to transport all of our equipment, including helicopters."

There were a few challenges to be faced as the brigade prepared for the movement.

"We haven't done anything on this scale since Operation Desert Storm," Shaw said. "Commercial shipping, technology and regulations from the Coast Guard, as well as other agencies, have changed since then. But the civilians and personnel back at Fort Stewart have helped us prepare for those changes."

Once the equipment arrives in the Middle East, it will still have a journey to make before it reaches its final destination.

"It will take about a month for the equipment to arrive at a port in Kuwait," said Maj. Kelly Donna, 1st BCT Aviation Element. "From there, the vehicles will go through a series of checks. The Soldiers will then drive the vehicles to their destinations."

3rd Inf. Div. makes history, changes, advances in Iraq



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane

Sgt. Beau Saucier, a 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry team leader, kicks in the door on a suspected insurgent's house during a raid.



Sgt. Matthew Wester

An Iraqi Soldier displays an ink-stained finger to show that he voted in the national elections Dec. 12 at a polling site near Taji, Iraq. Iraqi Security Forces voted early so they could provide security at other polling sites Dec. 15. The open national elections are an Iraqi success story.



File photo

A child in Tawaiha holds two stuffed animals he recieved from civil affairs troops. 3rd Inf. Div. Soldiers gave out stuffed animals, soccer balls and humanitarian aid such as food and clothing throughout Iraq.